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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News

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This service distributes news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this email is encouraged.

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Headline: Confused about anthrax? Get the facts on DoD homepage

By Vera Ando-Winstead, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--Confused about anthrax and the anthrax vaccination program? If you have Internet capability, you can easily access accurate and reliable information via the Department of Defense Health Affairs homepage.

The web site address for DoD Health Affairs is <http://www.ha.osd.mil>. On that homepage, clicking on the "Hot Topics Anthrax Vaccination Program" will link you to the DefenseLink force protection page--
http://www.defenselink.mil/other_info/protection.html.

The force protection page has numerous articles dealing with the anthrax vaccination program. It contains several media releases, a tri-fold brochure about the program, an overview of the program and frequently asked questions and their answers. You can download the tri-fold brochure to have the information handy.

The force protection page also contains several information papers on the DoD's biological warfare threat analysis, the anthrax vaccine, and the use of the vaccine during the Gulf War. This web site should provide you with ample excellent information on anthrax and the vaccination

program.

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Headline: Navy Hospital Guam treats students after school bus collision

By Kimberly Allen Rawlings, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Malojloj, GUAM --The medical personnel at Naval Hospital (NH) Guam have had a lot of experience dealing with emergencies. So when the emergency recall occurred last week to respond to the three bus collision of middle school students, the staff was ready, willing and quick to come to their aid.

Emergency vehicles were dispatched to the scene, 15 miles across the island, where 93 students were en route home. Seven medics and the U.S. Navy rescue team put the children who sustained apparent injuries on stretchers and set their necks in braces as a precaution.

The medical staff at NH Guam treated one bus driver that sustained injuries, and 81 students were taken to the hospital for treatment or screening before being released to their families. The remaining students went to Guam Memorial Hospital.

Only four students needed to be kept overnight for further observation at NH Guam.

Although Naval Hospital Guam staff does not look forward to emergencies, they are proving to be more than capable in responding to such situations.

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Headline: Bremerton helps tobacco addicts kick bad habit

By JOSN José Blanco, Naval Hospital Bremerton

BREMERTON, Wash.--Naval Hospital Bremerton is working hard to help Sailors and Marines kick tobacco habits. John Vaughan, the new program director for Naval Hospital Bremerton's Tobacco Cessation Program, knows too well smokers' anxiousness, urgency and feelings of helplessness over lost self-control due to addiction.

Vaughan, a former pack-or-more-a-day smoker, says his job at the hospital is to persuade smokers to make healthy choices to improve their lives.

"Our job is not to police smokers and make them quit. Rather, it's about taking a proactive approach by slowly easing away the cravings through physical, spiritual, and mental conditioning. Each tobacco cessation session will focus on the individual user's needs with a holistic approach to quitting the habit."

Vaughan's own years of addictive behavior now give him insight.

"Smoking is an addiction. I struggled with these cravings for 31 years. I slept with dip in my mouth just to keep my nicotine levels high. Smokers make rationalizations, justifications, all sorts of reasons as to why they keep doing something that isn't good for them."

Along with his personal journey to kick his tobacco habit, Vaughan, a Chemical Dependency Rehabilitation Specialist,

uses his counseling experience in alcohol dependency to treat smokers' addictions.

"I am an ex-smoker who went through this program and quit last October. I'm here to assist them [smokers] in the process and make the experience easier."

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Headline: Twenty-two commands recognized for excellent health programs

By Earl Hicks, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--In recognition of command efforts to keep today's Sailors and Marines healthy and fit, Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC), Norfolk announced its 1998 Command Excellence in Health Promotion awards.

Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, N.C., and USS Enterprise (CVN 65) led the field of winners with the Gold Star Award. Presented annually by NEHC, the awards encourage Sailors to maintain Navy physical readiness standards and recognize commands for excellence in health promotion programs.

The program, which began in 1995, has three levels of awards: Bronze Anchor, Silver Eagle and Gold Star. Each level represents increased command participation in health promotion programs.

Bravo Zulu to the commands whose efforts resulted in improved health programs for their Sailors:

Gold Anchor Award

Naval Hospital, Camp Lejeune, N.C.
USS Enterprise (CVN 65)

Silver Eagle Award

Branch Medical Clinic, Mayport, Fla.
Naval Ambulatory Care Center, Newport, R.I.
Naval Hospital, Charleston, S.C.
Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Va.
Naval Medical Center, San Diego, Calif.
U.S. Naval Hospital, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico
U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan
Regional Support Organization, San Diego, Calif.
USS Comstock (LSD 45)
Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, S.C.

Bronze Anchor

Naval Ambulatory Care Center, New Orleans, La.
Naval Hospital Pensacola, Fla.
Naval Hospital, Twentynine Palms, Calif.
U.S. Naval Hospital, Naples, Italy
U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa, Japan
U.S. Naval Hospital, Rota, Spain
Commander Naval Surface Forces Atlantic Fleet
USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70)
USS George Washington (CVN 73)
Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Va.

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Headline: Yokosuka doctor's longboat trip turns to life-saving adventure
By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka

YOKOSUKA, Japan--A boat trip along the canals of Bangkok, Thailand turned from pleasure excursion to life-saving adventure for CDR Joe Sarachene, MC, and LT Aida Bernal, MSC, of U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka.

On the day of the officers' longboat trip, a small child slipped and fell into the canal ahead of them. An older child, 11-year-old Orn-u-ma "Bo" Saelim, dove in to attempt a rescue, but she couldn't swim.

The younger child was rescued, but Bo did not come back to the surface. Several minutes later Sarachene and Bernal arrived at the scene. Sarachene decided to jump in and help, but the child was pulled out of the water before he could jump in.

One of the rescuers had grabbed Bo by the legs, held her upside down and began shaking her up and down in an attempt to get the water out of her lungs. Sarachene intervened and his guide explained that Sarachene was a doctor.

"I started to do CPR," he said. "She was wet, her lips were blue, her eyes were rolled back. She had a weak pulse...I pinched her nose and filled her lungs with air. That forced the water out...and she started breathing on her own."

Bo did not regain consciousness, and Sarachene couldn't tell if her eyes were reactive to light. She was recovering, but there might be brain damage. He knew Bo had to get to a hospital.

After getting her to a medical facility, Sarachene and Bernal stayed for a while, but Bo did not regain consciousness.

The pair continued their trip in Thailand but returned in a couple of days to Bangkok to see Bo in the hospital. The doctor treating her explained that she was free from any brain damage. She would be okay.

Before leaving, Sarachene gave Bo a stuffed animal and some candy. Her family wanted to show their appreciation and gave Sarachene pictures of Bo and a clock that he proudly hung in his office at the base hospital.

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Headline: Navy research attacks respiratory diseases
By Kimberly Allen Rawlings, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON--Navy research has developed another tool to combat epidemics of acute respiratory diseases.

Naval Health Research Center (NHRC), Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit No. 5, and Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton recently performed a study on Marine Corps trainees at the Infantry Training School at Camp Pendleton. Over 1,000 Marines volunteered to be a part of the study of acute respiratory cases.

The study consisted of a once a week oral administration of the Federal Drug Administration approved antibiotic,

Azithromycin, in a high-risk population known for frequent cases of acute respiratory disease and pneumonia. The Infantry Training School was chosen because it had some of the highest pneumonia-related hospitalization rates among Navy and Marine Corps personnel. During several previous winters, military health officials had employed the mass use of the intramuscular injections of benzathine penicillin G (BPG) to control the outbreaks.

BPG, which has been in use since the 1950s, has been used to treat and prevent streptococcal infections among recruits and other crowded military populations.

"Now we have found that Azithromycin may also be useful in combating these epidemics, and because it prevents more types of infections, it may be a better choice to combat bacterial respiratory epidemics of unknown cause," said CAPT Gregory C. Gray, MC, researcher at NHRC.

The benefit of using Azithromycin is that it protects against more bacterial pathogens, which is necessary in large high-risk populations. For the Sailor and Marine, the new regimen is also much more attractive because it's less painful to take the new oral antibiotic than to receive the old penicillin injection.

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Headline: TRICARE question and answer

Question: If I enroll in TRICARE does that mean my whole family has to enroll?

Answer: No. Family members have a choice and are not required to enroll in TRICARE Prime. Depending on your specific situation and needs, it may be best, for example, for a spouse to be in TRICARE Prime and a student son or daughter to use Extra or Standard. Contact your TRICARE Service Center or local medical facility for advice.

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Headline: Healthwatch: Eating fruits and vegetables is key to good health

By Mary Kay Solera, Navy Environmental Health Center

NORFOLK, Va.—It is not a new approach, but the ongoing "5 A Day for Better Health Program" is still a good way to cut cancer risk; help control blood cholesterol, blood pressure, and diabetes; and control weight without drugs or deprivation. The fruits and vegetables message, developed seven years ago, has been a collaborative effort between the National Cancer Institute and the Produce for Better Health Foundation. This has been used throughout the Department of Defense (DoD) to encourage military personnel to include more fruits and vegetables in their diet.

DoD wants to increase awareness of the need to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily and to tell personnel and their families how to incorporate the five fruits and vegetables into their daily eating patterns.

There are easy ways to include fruits and vegetables in

your daily diet. Include a glass of fruit or vegetable juice with breakfast, have a salad for lunch, eat a vegetable or fruit as a snack during the day and have two vegetables at dinner instead of just one.

Contrary to some misconceptions, serving sizes are smaller than you think.

One serving size is defined as:

- 1 medium fruit or 1/2 cup of small or cut up fruit
- 3/4 cup (6 oz) 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 1/4 cup dried fruit (raisins, apricots, dates)
- 1/2 cup raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables (spinach, lettuce)
- 1/2 cup cooked beans or peas (lentils, navy beans, chick peas, kidney beans)

Fruits and vegetables have other added benefits to keep you healthy:

- They are loaded with vitamins and minerals for body functions.
- They fill you up but not out, which is great when you're trying to lose weight
- They help keep you regular (controls diarrhea and constipation).
- They have soluble fiber that evens out your glucose level (great for diabetics) and lowers cholesterol.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, the three most important personal habits that influence health are smoking, alcohol consumption and diet. For the two out of three adults that do not drink excessively or smoke, the single most important personal choice influencing one's long-term health is what you eat.

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Comments about and ideas for MEDNEWS are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, Earl Hicks, at email: mednews@us.med.navy.mil; Telephone 202/762-3223, (DSN) 762-3223, or fax 202/762-3224.

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